A Letter from that incomparable Botaniſt Mr. John Ray, *giving an account of* the Phytographia *of* Leonard Plukenet, M. D. *Lately publiſhed.* Lond. fol. 1691.

SIR,

IN compliance with your deſires I have ſent you a ſhort Account of Dr. *Plukenet's Phytographia*, not ſuch an one as the Work deſerves, but as I am able to draw up: wherein if you find not ſatisfaction, blame your own Judgment for thinking me able to give it.

The Learned and Ingenious Author of theſe Tables hath therein exhibited to the publick view the Figures and Titles of many hundred Plants; the moſt part of them, as yet neither deſcribed nor figured, ſome deſcribed but not figured, others though already figured, yet not well and exactly. Now a good Figure having this advantage of a verbal Deſcription, that it conveys ſpeedily to the Mind, with eaſe and pleaſure, a clearer and truer *Idea* of the thing delineated, than the Underſtanding can with much Labour, and in a long time form to itſelf from a Deſcription, be it never ſo exact, the pains taken, and coſt beſtowed in deſigning and engraving ſuch Plants as have already been only deſcribed, or if figured, but lamely and imperfectly, muſt be acknowledged to have been to very good purpoſe, and to merit the thanks of thoſe who ſhall be aſſiſted and eaſed thereby, that is, the greateſt part of Herbariſts, to whom a deſcription without a Figure ſignifies little. The new and *non-deſcript Species* may give entertainment and diverſion to thoſe of the higheſt form in *Botanics*, who will here meet with many Plants they have not before ſeen, or it may be heard of. As for the Sculps they recommend themſelves

to

to the peruſal of all ſorts, as well for their Beauty and Elegancy, as for their exact ſimilitude to the Vegetables they were taken from or are intended to repreſent; which are the two only qualities requiſite to the perfection of a Cut.

The Titles ſubjoined to each Table may ſupply the place of Deſcriptions, as containing certain Characteriſtic Notes, ſufficient to diſtinguiſh the *Species* to which they belong from any others whatſoever: So that they alone without any *Icon*, if diligently heeded and attended to, might ſerve to lead a Man into a certain knowledge of the Plants.

In this Work the Reader will find many miſtakes rectified, and obſcurities cleared up, which I ſhall not ſtand to enumerate; many *Deſiderata* are ſupplied, of which I ſhall inſtance in ſome few Particulars.

The Figure of that ſort of *Artemiſia*, of which the *Chineſe* make their *Moxa*, ſo famous for curing the Gout by burning.

Of the Root *Genſing* or *Ninzin* and its Plant, growing in the Kingdom of *Corea*, ſo much Celebrrted in *China* and *Japan* for a *Panacea*.

Of the *Virginian Polyrrhizos* or Snakeweed, ſo much talked of for the Cure of the Rattle-Snake. This hath been already figured, but not exactly.

Of the Tree whoſe Bark is well known by the name of *Cortex Winteranus*.

Add to theſe the Figures of that rare *Virginian* Hartstongue that propagates itſelf by the tip of the Leaf turning downwards, and when it touches the Ground taking Root; from whence ſprings up a young Plant, which at laſt is of its own accord as it were weaned and ſeparated from its Mother, and maintains itſelf by its own Root.

Of a ſort of Kidney-Bean from *Mevis* Iſland, which they call the Turnep Tree, having an eſculent Root.

Of

Of two ſorts of Kidney-Beans, which are not trifoliate but ſingle-leaved.

Of the top and Flowers of that Plant which *Lobel* inſcribes *Verbaſcum Sylveſtre Salvifolium exoticum folio rotundiore* erroneouſly, giving only the Figure of the Leaves and lower part of it: and *Parkinſon*, I know not how, deceiving himſelf and impoſing upon others, makes a kind of *Ciſtus*; whereas it appears to be a ſort of *Salvia fruticoſa*. For the reſt I refer the Reader to the Work itſelf.

JOHN RAY.

FINIS